

## Paper 3: Corpuscularianism and the Mechanical Philosophy

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### DUE DATE

This paper is due by midnight on Friday, March 3rd 2017. Please submit your paper on the Canvas website in .doc or .docx format if possible. Other acceptable formats include .pdf and .odt.

### TOPIC

Although Descartes, Boyle, and Galileo held widely different philosophical views, they are often all classified as proponents of the “mechanical philosophy.” The mechanical philosophy, recall, consists of a number of different claims. For instance, mechanical philosophers generally argued that matter is composed of many small corpuscles that were, either theoretically or practically, indivisible. They often claimed that heat, color, and smell are not properties of objects in-themselves, but rather, are “secondary qualities” that observers attribute to objects. And so on. The purpose of this paper is to explore the relationship between the various claims of the mechanical philosophy.

In this paper, defend the following conditional claim as best you can:

*Claim:* If a scientist must explain the color of an object by appealing to properties of its constituent corpuscles, then the scientist’s explanation must (a) rely only on corpuscles’ primary qualities, (b) rely only on properties that can be described mathematically, and (c) not appeal to formal or final causes in Aristotle’s sense.

In other words, your goal is to show that a commitment to corpuscular philosophy requires a commitment to other theses of the mechanical philosophy. Make sure to properly cite any arguments or concepts that are introduced in the assigned readings.

### TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Your paper should be as long as is necessary to defend the above claim. As a rough guideline, most students need about 1,250 to 1,500 words to accomplish this task. Your paper should not exceed 1,500 words, however. Please include a complete bibliography with any other sources that you have consulted.